1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

602 592 the mother who bore me and the consideration naturally expected from her cannot, in the nature of things, be given or received by *all* of the elder and younger mothers in exactly equal degree, but the type of behaviour is similar. The elder sister who carried her younger brother about on her back when she herself could hardly more than walk, or the elder brother who first taught his younger brother to make and set his little traps, has a warmth of regard which he cannot extend with just the same force to fifty or one hundred younger brothers, but nevertheless the pattern will be of the same sort if and when similar opportunity offers. The same may be said for the younger and the elder fathers, and again for the *tatekãi*, the 'female father'. But here elements other than 605 604 the early household patterns enter as also with *manu*, the mother's brother. Chief of these other elements is the fact that these two classes of relatives, together with the *va cepua*, i.e. cross-cousins (mostly children of the *manu* and *tatekãi* classes), and also the *ovimumba* (plural) (one's own nephews along similar lines of descent), are all potential spouses or potential relatives-in-law.[1] The relations of *ocimumba* (sister's son) and *manu* (mother's brother) in Umbundu society follow a pattern not exactly like any other set of relationships in any society of which I know. Suggestions of this have already been given. The *manu* shares his sister's desire for the advancement of her son, and if the nephew has had a part of his education in the uncle's home or on his trading expeditions, the relationship will have become closer. It may be, however, that the uncle's own difficulties may lead him to exploit 602 his nephew rather than to attend only to his advancement.[2] The 178 ties of the paternal group tend to be strengthened at the expense of the maternal family and it seems that the increasing localization of the Umbundu family with the supplanting of trade by agriculture (as a man's full-time occupation) has furthered this process.

602 It is very important for one who would understand the Ovimbundu to look upon the Umbundu kinship structure with the eyes of an Ocimbundu. If one brought up to other ideas and other relationships finds this difficult, that is all the more reason for making the effort. I cannot better summarize the Umbundu

[1] See *infra*, pp. 52 ff.

[2] This is one of several points where the commercial tendencies seem to come into conflict with the patterns of the kinship group.

1 Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

The practice and teaching of modesty seem to have been changing considerably for a long time. The influence of Europeans has doubtless had its effect, but more fundamental, it seems, has been the effect of increasingly generalized use of clothing, a process which began perhaps 200 years ago, but is yet far from complete. The time when boy or girl may begin to wear clothing is determined less by age than by the economic status of his family. There seems to be no shame (on the part of the child) connected with late wearing of clothes, but once a child has begun to wear a cloth, he or she is taught that it is shameful to take it off in the presence of those who are older. That this attitude is not of recent origin is attested by its appearance in a biographical narrative which goes back sixty years or more.[1] A large proportion of the women have only enough cloth for workaday wear for a short skirt, so that they leave the torso bare, but once one becomes accustomed to covering the torso always, she would be ashamed not to. This feeling belongs more to the field of economic status than to that of modesty. This shows up clearly in the strong objection to being ragged (*epêl*), which has nothing to do with modesty but rather with economic status. The narrative concludes the teaching of social usage with this observation: 'From the time that children first enter into the school of understanding (*olondunge*), parents recognize that it is proper to respect them, rather than to revile them or tell them that which is evil.'

3. *Training in skills.* Before the age of eight or nine, children acquire few definite skills. Many of their games, however, are in imitation of adult activities, and adults recognize their preparatory nature and value. The little girl in caring for her younger sibling acquires certain skills, but with little or no definite adult guidance. Little boys begin early to make and set traps and snares under the tuition of an elder sibling or cousin. The first rat or bird caught belongs to the tutor. Games of many sorts are played: games with sides, round games, games with an 'It', imaginative games, and competitive games; games demanding skill, especially with dances of some intricacy. Games in imitation of animals are favourites, including 'bird-calls', in which very ingenious words are set to the bird songs.

4. The Ovimbundu have a custom somewhat comparable to what Vedder calls '*child insurance*' among the Herero,[2] i.e., the

[1] From a manuscript by Daniel Kalei of Bailundu.

[2] In Hahn *et al.*, op. cit., p. 177.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

sending of children to stay with relatives or friends. The Ovimbundu consider it definitely an educational device. From the age of six or seven years children are sent singly or in pairs to spend as much as one or two years in the home of the mother's brother. If conditions are favourable they may also be sent to stay with the father's sister or brother, and girls (other than the first-born) may be sent to the mother's mother. Formerly, prominent families arranged for their sons to stay in the king's capital. These periods spent away from home may continue well into adolescence. Not only relatives but also friends, blood-brothers, and *vakuacisoko* (members of a certain communal order)[1] exchange children for certain periods in this way. This custom is by no means dead. It is now being carried on even within the Christian community. Its educational purpose is obvious.

Later Childhood

(*From about nine years until puberty*)

There is no definite time which marks the transition from early to later childhood, but there are marked differences between the two periods. The chief criterion is one of physical development for as soon as the child is physically able, he will begin to assume a definite role in the work of the adult community. This rarely comes before nine years of age and may be somewhat delayed. Soon after a child gets the permanent teeth, a notch in the form of an inverted V (∧) is chipped between the two upper front incisors.[2] This is a sort of national mark which many people omit to give their children at present. The line of observance is not sharply drawn as between Christians and non-Christians, as with the Herero.[3]

Formerly, the beginning of the period was well marked for the boy by his first trip with a trading caravan. Most of the present older generation have had this experience and nearly every man of the present middle-aged generation as well. Nowadays the boy of this age may begin to work in the fields with his father, he may begin to learn a trade, or he may be sent to school. Few Ovimbundu put their children in school before this age, and they evidently do not believe that younger children would profit by the instruction

[1] See *infra*, p. 114 f.
[2] See Hambly, op. cit., Plates XLIX and LIV.
[3] Vedder in Hahn *et al.*, op. cit., p. 177 f.

233 The cattle herd obtains most of its food by grazing, but in the dry season the grass withers. Childs states[1] that "Herding has been a [609] function of the sister's son, and even now there is a reluctance on the part of the boys to herd for their fathers."

235 462 [844] Chickens are owned and looked after by both men and women, but other animals only by men. Boys may have small stock of their own, and a boy's economic independence most frequently begins with his owning a chicken.

231 Hambly states that goats are more common than any other animal, and that every family has one or more. These animals are not fed or watered, but are allowed to wander to find their own sustenance. Goats are not milked. Young males are castrated. The goat is frequently used in sacrifices. Sheep also are allowed to find their own food; the males are not castrated. Pigs are cared for comparatively carefully, receiving water and a daily supply of sweet potatoes and their leaves, together with some corn. Male pigs are castrated.[2]

APICULTURE[3]

[439] Beeswax was an important item of trade in the caravan days, and is still sold to Portuguese traders' stores, where it is massed into large rectangular cakes for export. Honey is eaten alone or with manioc, and [742] a fermented beer called *ochasa* is made by adding honey to corn-beer. [273] Fibre strainers are used for cleaning the wax, and large shallow baskets [252] are employed for drying the honey in the sun.

Large cylindrical hives, which are private property, are placed high in the trees. These are made by removing a cylinder of bark and lashing the halves together with strands of bark, forming a hive which has a diameter of one foot.

In Elende honey is removed from the hives during the months of August and December. One man ascends the tree in order to lower the hive with a long rope of bark or plaited fibre, while beneath the tree men are prepared to take the hive, which is opened over a smoky fire.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

326 782 *Smithing.* The profession of blacksmith or *ocivinda* is an important one, and, like hunting and divining, is sacred and is entered with special ritual. Often, but not always, these three professions are passed on by inheritance. For smithing two years' apprenticeship to a member of the profession is necessary, and is usually entered upon at the age of eighteen. At the end of this period the master examines his pupil, and makes tools for him, especially the heavy hammer or *onjundo* which is regarded as symbolic of his craft. For the inauguration ceremony the boy provides four chickens (2 male, 2 female), a dog, and a goat; the blood of these animals is sprinkled on his tools, and their flesh is eaten at a feast [553] attended by the villagers. Throughout the procedure the boy remains standing on the small anvil. Finally he is asked to choose his professional name; he then steps down from the anvil a qualified blacksmith.

(1) Childs, 1949, p.109. (2) Hambly, op.cit., p.154.
(3) Hambly, (4) 1934.

611 dispersed. Both groups have ritual leaders, whose offices are quite dis-
613 tinct. Barnes' suggestion[1] is that the two groups must be father's patrilineage and mother's matrilineage, with the qualification mentioned below.

613 The *oluse* consists of a large number of village groups, some of which
622 recognise mutual relationship,[2] but with no recognised head (other than the village headmen) except in the case of the royal families. Land is
[428] owned by the *oluse* and passed on within it from father to son, or from elder to younger brother. Succession to village or tribal office, from village headman to king, descends in the same way.[3] Ritual leadership
[346] within the *oluse* lies with the village headman, who is in charge of the spirit-hut *(etambo)* of the guardian spirit of the village (or of the nuclear *oluse* within the village), and who officiates at regular village worship, including agricultural festivals.

613 The *oluina*, on the other hand, is a dispersed and apparently larger
428 group, whose members live with their various paternal lines of descent. The size of the *oluina* is unknown; Childs merely refers to it as a "large
604 and widespread organization, with a recognized head". The office of head of the *oluina (ukulu wepata)* descends from mother's brother to sister's son. Negotiable and moveable property, including cattle and trade goods, is owned by the *oluina* and inherited by the sister's son. Formerly the mother's elder brother had great powers over his sister's sons, and was even able to pawn them or sell them into slavery, to meet his own debts.
[592] The patrilocal household is usually responsible for training children, especially during their early years, but they are frequently sent to the *oluina* (i.e. to the mother's brother) for at least a part of their educa-
[582] tion. At death or divorce of parents, children go to the *oluina*.

43 The head *(ukulu wepata)* of the *oluina* is usually both the legal and
782 spiritual head of the group, although today the two functions are often divided. He is in charge of the spirit hut *(etambo)* of the guardian spirit of the *oluina* (of whom there may be more than one, and of whom he becomes one after death). He leads the *oluina* in propitiatory rituals carried out in case of illness, death, or other misfortunes within the group, or in prayers made for desired economic advantages. (Apparently no regular rituals are carried out by the *oluina*.) The *ukulu wepata* may or may not be at the same time a village headman; if he is, he will be priest of two lines and have charge of two spirit huts; if he is not, there may be two (or more) priests in the village, each in charge of the spirit-hut of his *oluse* or *oluina*.

The onžlž yohonji and the onžlž yohumbo

613 The *oluse* and the *oluina* are both divided into male and female
602 "sides": the *onžlž yohonji* (the side of the bow) and the *onžlž yohumbo*
582 (the side of the basket). It has been noted above that uterine brothers and sisters belong to the same *oluse* and *oluina*, but to the male or female side in each, according to sex. The composition of these "sides" is

(1) Loc.cit.
(2) If some villages within the *oluse* cannot trace mutual relationship, the *oluse* should perhaps be called a petri-clan rather than a patrilineage.
(3) But see below, p.29.

862 "The practice of leaving the occisembe in the village by day makes his elder sibling[1] responsible for much of his education.....She herself may not be more than six or seven years old and consequently cannot be expected to 'educate' her charge very thoroughly. She interests herself in his walking and talking and he will initate her in many things."[2]

863 General instruction in cleanliness begins at this age, although sphincter control may have begun much earlier, since the mother feels every movement made by the baby on her back.

145 After weaning the physical development of the child proceeds more slowly than that of European peoples, and Childs believes that this may be due to deficiencies in diet.[3]

CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

857 From the time a child is able to walk until he is about nine years old he continues seeing the same people as before, but he becomes less de-
861 pendent upon the elder sister or cousin who helped him, and begins his life-long association with his age-mates. The sex-division of society starts for him at this stage: from about eight years boys begin to eat in the *onjango* with their fathers, girls continuing in the kitchen with their mothers. After about eight years the father becomes largely responsible for the education of boys, the mother for that of girls. During this period the child's education may be summarised under three heads:

869 (a) *Psychological*, chiefly fear of real or imaginary dangers. This is imparted by mother, elder siblings, and perhaps by a grandmother; there is a tendency for the teaching of fear to be done by women.[4]

867 (b) *Social*, chiefly usages of etiquette and acquaintance with the kinship structure and its requirements. A child of about eight is supposed to know his social status and all the etiquette that pertains to it. In the *onjango* the hierarchy of age is observed, honoured guests and old men being served first, and so on all down the line. With the decline of the *onjango*, there has been a great decline in the teaching of etiquette and social usage, and this naturally affects boys rather than girls.

864 Little direct sex teaching is attempted, and adults are reticent in speaking of sexual matters in the presence of children. But since children live with their parents in one-roomed houses, it is inevitable that children should sometimes observe intercourse.

868 (c) *Training in skills*: Children are taught few definite skills before the age of eight or nine, but many of their games are in imitation of adult activities.

● 604 From the age of six or seven years children are usually sent to spend
857 one or two years with the mother's brother. They may also be sent to the father's sister or brother for a period, and, in the case of girls, to the mother's mother. Formerly prominent families sent their children for a

(1) Either a brother or sister may act as nurse.
(2) Childs, op.cit., p.95. (3) Ibid., p.97.
(4) Childs actually writes " 'the side of the basket' " (p.100), but seems to be referring simply to female relatives.

time to the village of the paramount chief. These periods spent away from home continue into adolescence. Not only relatives, but also friends, blood-brothers and *vakwacisoko* (see below) exchange children in this way.

Later childhood

No definite time marks the transition from early to later childhood, but there are marked differences between the two stages. As soon as the child is physically able, he begins to assume a definite role in the community. Soon after a child gets his permanent teeth, a notch in the form of an inverted V is chipped between the two upper front incisors. Formerly the beginning of the period was marked for the boy by his first trip with a trading caravan; today a boy of this age may begin to work in the fields with his father, or begin to learn a trade, or be sent to school. A girl starts to learn field-work and housework.

Professions

A boy is expected to learn the profession or *ocipinduko* in which his father or his mother's brother is expert, and after that, should he wish to learn some other side-line profession, he may apprentice himself. All children, both boys and girls, are expected to learn to cultivate, but that is not counted as a profession. The principal *ovipinduko* (professions) listed by Childs are: for girls, basket-making, pottery-making, medical practice and divination; for boys, mat-making, wood-working, rope-making, thatching, fishing, apiculture, hunting, smithing, and medical practice and divination. The last three, as has been mentioned above, are "sacred" and entered under special conditions.

"Later childhood, then, is the period of technical training during which it is expected that a large amount of economic responsibility will be assumed. A child begins to own property even before this, and from the beginning of childhood will be accounted legally responsible for his actions. It is recognised, however, that he should not be set tasks beyond the experience or ability of his age and that the full responsibility of adulthood will come only with marriage."(1)

The coming of European commerce, industry, and government has created new types of employment for boys and men, some of which cause a prolonged absence from the village and a loosening or severing of kinship ties. There are no estimates of the number of persons employed by Europeans, or the average length of their absence from home.

ADOLESCENCE(2)

Childs found that the onset of puberty was late among the Ovimbundu, coming between fourteen and sixteen years for girls and between fifteen and seventeen years for boys. Soon after puberty young people generally stop sleeping in the parents' house. The girls congregate in kitchens and each boy builds himself a house, in which he will live through adolescence

(1) Childs, op.cit., p.110.
(2) Based on Childs, op.cit., pp.98-9 and 111-18.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

He draws the crescentic arrowhead (p. 123) still common among the Ovimbundu and Vachokue; the double iron gong (p. 122): and the musical bow, which he calls a viola (p. 121). 175 114 [534]

Sogaur states that iron-working had an advanced technique at Dindo, more than half a century ago. According to Sogaur, the blacksmith was using scrap iron from European sources (II, p. 14). 175 326

Perhaps the most valuable of Chatelain's books is "Fifty Folk Tales of Angola." The stories are accompanied by translations and ethnological notes, the most important of which are references to the carrying of a corpse on a pole; the building of a cairn of stones over the corpse of a hunter; matrilineal descent and the power of the maternal uncle over the persons of his nieces and nephews (sisters' children). My observations included some details respecting the pawning of a sister's children to redeem the debts of their mother's brother. Chatelain adds that sisters' children are successors to private property and chieftainship (pp. 8–10). My notes agree that property is inherited by children of a deceased man's sister, but my informants said that a new chieftain is normally the eldest son of the principal wife of the dead chief. Chatelain's folklore stories, fifty in number, relate chiefly to animals; this was the only kind of story told to me, but W. C. Bell has recorded a few tales of another type. 173 [114] [764] [611] [604] [428] [538]

Marquardsen (1928) devotes only one-fourth of his book to the ethnology of Angola, which he treats in a very general way; there is no section dealing specifically with any particular tribe. The author calls attention to Chapman's observation of rock paintings of South African Bushman type, between Cuma and Luimbale in northwest Angola. I have elsewhere remarked on the occasional occurrence of physical types which show a strain of Bushman blood. Today Bushmen penetrate southern Angola from the Kalahari (Plate LXIX, Figs. 1, 2), but their presence in times past or present does not affect the course of history or the data of ethnology to an appreciable extent. 114 177 [531] [144]

Marquardsen gives some notes of a general kind on Vaheneca, Mahuila and other tribes of southwest Angola. The suggestion is feasible that the Umbundu name Suku, for a supreme being, is the same as the Nzambi of Lunda and the Congo. Marquardsen refers to the importance of the maternal uncle in Umbundu society, to the poison ordeal, and to the burial of an Umbundu chief in oxhide, all of which points were recorded in my observations at Elende. 114 101

Ferreira Diniz's book is unobtainable, but, judging from the summary given in *Anthropos* (XX, 1925, pp. 321–331), the information was collected by a questionnaire widely distributed among adminis-

601 Table A indicates a wide use of the word *nawa* for "in laws" of the speaker's generation. Thus Ngonga calls the wives and husbands of his brothers and sisters *nawa* without distinguishing them in any way. The term *nawa* has a still wider connotation for it includes Ngonga's father's brother's son's wife, and his father's sister's daughter's husband. Ngonga's wife said that she uses the word *nawa* for all the brothers and sisters of her husband, for all the children of her husband's father's brother, her husband's father's sister's children, her husband's mother's brother's children, and her husband's mother's sister's children. Reciprocally, all these people call Ngonga's wife *nawa*.

605 582 Table A introduces the question of cross-cousin marriage, which is the functional form among the Ovimbundu. My informant said that he calls his mother's sister's children brothers and sisters, therefore he could not marry the girls. Neither are his father's brother's daughters eligible for marriage with him. The table shows the truth of this, for Ngonga calls his father's brother's daughter *mukai*, meaning "sister"; she addresses him as *kota* or *huwa* ("brother"). Ngonga also addresses his father's brother's son by the term *manjonge* ("younger brother") or *huvanga* ("older brother") according to the relative ages of the speaker and the person addressed.

When Ngonga was asked whether he could marry a daughter of his mother's brother, he replied, "I could marry her very well indeed." A marriage of Ngonga with his father's sister's daughter would be permissible but Ngonga said the marriage is not regarded as a good one "because the children will be stupid." Ngonga could marry his mother's brother's daughter's daughter, or his mother's brother's son's daughter. It would also be permissible for Ngonga to marry his father's sister's daughter's daughter, or his father's sister's son's daughter.

604 601 Ngonga said, "My father's brother is my father, and my mother's sister is my mother." When questioned further my informant said that a marriage with daughters of these relatives would make him *ocinyama*, which means "an animal." Relatives would say, "You have shamed the family." It will be noted from Table B, First Generation of Ngonga's Ascendants, that Ngonga's father's brother calls him *omolange*, meaning "my child," for which the reciprocal is *tate* ("father"). Ngonga's father's brother's wife is *mai* ("mother"), and she calls him *omolange* ("my child"). Ngonga distinguishes between his mother's oldest sister (*mai yukulu*), and his mother's

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

youngest sister (*mai yamalele*). Ngonga's father's oldest brother is *tate yakulu*.

Thus far Ngonga was clear about his eligibility for marriage, and in addition to this he was sure that he could not marry a sister of his wife while his wife was alive, but he could marry his wife's sister, after the death of his wife. The wives of a deceased elder brother are divided among his younger brothers, or a man may inherit the wife of his mother's brother. Ngonga always laughed heartily at the idea of marrying a woman much older than himself. He did not know whether he could marry certain older people of the *ndatembo* and *maikulu* class but thought the idea amusing because of their age.

In discussing law, inheritance, and slavery, the importance of the mother's brother will be indicated, and for this relative there is the term *mama* (or *inamu*). The *mama* calls Ngonga *ocimumba cange*, but he calls Ngonga's wife *ndatembo*. Ngonga's mother's brother's wife, also Ngonga's father's sister, are *aphai*, which my informant interpreted as a "female father."

The use of the word *nawa* has been explained in such a way as to show that Ngonga's wife uses this term for a large class of relatives by marriage who are of the same generation as her husband, while these people reciprocally use the word *nawa*. Ngonga uses the word *nawa* in exactly the same way for corresponding relatives of his wife.

This term *nawa* is not to be confused with the term *ndatembo* whose connotation is indicated by the following examples. The wife of Ngonga applies the term *ndatembo* to certain of her husband's relations who are not of his generation. Thus she calls Ngonga's mother *ndatembo* when speaking of her, but she addresses her mother-in-law as *mai* ("mother"), while *ndatembo* describes the relationship between Ngonga's wife and his father. Moreover, Ngonga's wife uses *ndatembo* to describe her husband's father's brother's wife, and Ngonga's wife is called *ndatembo* by her husband's father's sister, her husband's father's sister's husband, and her husband's mother's brother. These are relatives by marriage but they are not of the same generation as her husband.

Table C, Second Generation of Ngonga's Ascendants, gives no particular difficulty. *Maikulu* includes the paternal grandmother, the father's father's sister (great aunt), the maternal grandmother, the mother's mother's brother's wife, and the mother's mother's sister. Therefore *maikulu* is a class name for the second generation of female ascendants.

601 *Sekulu* includes the father's father, the mother's mother's brother, and the mother's mother's sister's husband. The terms *sekululu* and *kukululu* were used by Ngonga as being synonymous, and therefore they have the same connotation. With regard to the term *maikulu* Ngonga seemed clear, but in reply to questions concerning the reason for having the terms *kukululu* and *sekululu*, he was evidently confused. At last he said, "It does not matter, they are the same people." Ngonga never hesitated in giving the reciprocal for all these terms, which is in every instance *onekulu*. These terms may have been correlated with different functions which have now become obsolete.

604 601 The two most important collateral relatives in the parent's generation are the father's sister (*aphai*) and the mother's brother (*manu*). The term for father's sister means "female father." As such her relations to ego are similar to those of a father, consequently it is not considered right to marry her daughters. The mother's brother, on the other hand, is without doubt ego's most important relative. The two are linked by a series of reciprocal duties and obligations. Marriage of a mother's brother's daughter, or a mother's brother's widow, is a correct procedure. The value of the more important reciprocal duties is indicated in the following sections on law and government.

602 171 There was no possibility of devoting more time to the matter of relationship terms, but there is here sufficient to indicate the remarkable persistence of the kinship system in spite of three centuries of contact with the Portuguese and other Europeans. Moreover, the information gleaned by interrogation of Ngonga and his wife gives the main points for comparison with systems of a similar kind that have been given for Ashanti, Uganda, and Rhodesia, by Rattray, Roscoe, and Smith and Dale respectively. These kinship systems are the same both in general principles and in considerable detail.

601 The foregoing notes and tables were studied by Mr. Zachary Taylor of the University of Chicago, who prepared Tables E and F. Mr. F. Eggan offered useful criticisms. The Arabic numerals on these charts refer to the numbers used to designate terms of [115] relationship on the list on page 199. The ego or speaker is Ngonga, my interpreter, whose direct line of relationships is shown in Table E, while Table F indicates the terms used by Ngonga for his wife's relatives. The levels numbered in Roman numerals on Tables E and F indicate the generation stratification as follows:

428 not entitled to inheritance of land, cattle, or anything else belonging to the dead man. The greater part of the property would be bequeathed to the eldest brother of the deceased's mother.

428 604 768 There appears to be discussion as to the distribution of property, but the maternal uncle is responsible for settling disputes. He himself has the first claim, and in Ngonga's words, "If there are quarrels about the cattle, land, and other things, the mother's eldest brother will settle them."

The mother's brother has rights over his sister's children even to the extent of pawning them to pay his own debts. On the other hand the maternal uncle is responsible for the conduct of his sister's children. He would have to pay fines incurred by thefts they committed, and he provides for his sister's son a wife who is either his daughter or his widow.

Ngonga stated that the maternal uncle does not invariably take all the property of a deceased nephew for himself. He may give something to the deceased's mother, the deceased's maternal grandfather, or to a brother of the deceased. Such gifts appear to be the outcome of good will on the part of the dead man's maternal uncle; [421] there is no compulsion. Women never inherit cattle or rights to the use of land.

423 692 622 The king is the head of the legal system, though his activities as such are not so great as those of the village headman (*sekulu*). The *olosekulu* (there are usually more than one) of a village witness the final act in a divorce ceremony. They used to have charge of trials for theft, murder, adultery, likewise the right of settling arguments concerning the ownership of land. It was the *sekulu* who distributed the land to the extended families when a new village site was opened. The maternal uncles settled the minor divisions among the limited families.

643 There are many kings among the Ovimbundu, but I thought that there was a tendency to confuse the titles of *osoma* ("king") and *sekulu* ("headman" or "chief" of a village). The jurisdiction of a king is so well known that any person is able to say under which king he lives. Ngonga said definitely that a man of the Ovimbundu who was under the jurisdiction of a certain king would have to obey the commands of a visiting king, provided they were not in any way disapproved of by the king to whom first allegiance was due.

643 [465] A chief may demand labor for the building of his house or the cultivation of his land. He does not pay for this but usually gives beer to the workers; sometimes he secures the labor and gives nothing in return.

in return. Even a slave used to have rights of appeal to the king if he were starved and beaten without cause. The king was the prime mover in warfare. The whole legal system is at this time directly under Portuguese administration though the kings and chiefs have minor powers. Ngonga says that complainants who are dissatisfied with the decision of their own chief go to the Fort, meaning of course the Portuguese military post, or office of the Administrador.

There is no doubt that in former days the responsibility for crime and debt was transferred to a relative in the absence of the delinquent. If a thief escaped, responsibility would rest with a brother, a father or a son. The mother's brother was often held to be responsible for the misdeeds and debts of his sister's children. The mother's brother has rights that extend to the sale of his sister's children to pay his debts. For this reason Ngonga says, "If I have done wrong and they cannot catch me it is right that he (mother's brother) should pay for me."

I supposed the case of Ngonga having stolen a cow; he has been caught but escapes. Ngonga said that the man from whom he had stolen the animal would go to his (Ngonga's) mother's brother in order to name the price required for the cow, or any other possession which had been stolen. If the mother's brother thought the price reasonable he would pay. On the contrary, if the price claimed were too high the mother's brother would appeal, first to the village chief, then if necessary to the king.

Ownership of land does not appear to have been a source of dispute. Apparently land was distributed by the chief as explained in dealing with village organization. Rights seem to have been well defined and there was always enough land for a stranger. When a man was going away on a trading journey he might lend his land to another who would agree to cultivate it and take the produce for a year. I was unable to satisfy myself that land is now, or was in time past held to be the property of dead ancestors. The right to land depends on its use and allotment by a chief at the time of founding a village. A man who intended to be absent would make a payment so that he might leave his goods at the house of another. The chief would settle any disputes arising from these arrangements.

The complainant in a suit is called *ombile*, the defendant is *ovilue*. The name for a witness is *uvangi*. In the old days a false witness had to make recompense to the man about whom he had told a lie; he would probably have a beating as well. A master was in every way responsible for the actions of a slave. The degree of responsi-

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It was then the father who normally exercised authority over a boy, and on the father's death a child or youth would join the household of a father's brother. Yet the right of a sister's son to the inheritance of the movable property and to grants from his mother's brother was counterbalanced by the latter's right to sell his uterine nephew into slavery, a fate from which the father could save his son by ransoming him, in which case the mother's brother would no longer have this right.[86] In this society, the mother's brother—sister's son relationship was fundamentally an economic one, in which the sister's son received assistance in the trade and inherited his uncle's gains in this trade, but could himself be transformed into a source of capital.

I now summarize the evidence on Umbundu social control and its relation with the trading economy. It is clear that the Ovimbundu belonged to the number of those African societies with pyramidal[87] political systems and formal codes and courts of law, even though there exists uncertainty as to the relative power of the kingdoms and the sub-chiefdoms. Social control also operated through the kinship system, authority at the village level being in the hands of the head of the patrilineal group backed by the public opinion expressed in the men's house, and the dispersed matrilineal groups having sanctions in the right of sale of a sister's son and in the accusations of sorcery brought against those who failed to use wealth to aid their relatives. For the caravan trade to have attained the importance it did there must also have existed something of a *pax Umbundica* stimulated by the existence of such ties as that between *tjisolo* partners and the 'international' hospitality shown to diviners, hunters, and smiths. Evidence of this *pax Umbundica* is provided by the organization of caravans, and by the establishment of marriage ties between persons in different kingdoms, and between different royal houses.[88] However, warfare was not unknown between the different

[86] Childs, p. 44, and my informants.

[87] See Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, Introduction to *African Political Systems*.

[88] Hastings (p. 1) notes a marriage between the daughter of a king of Bie and Ekwikwi, king of Bailundo (1876–93). Childs (p. 171) notes that Kalukuluvu, king of Ndulu, was a sister's son of a king of Bailundo.

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On the village level, however, the importance of the mother's brother tie and of the tie between matrilateral 'brothers' becomes very apparent. None of Sapapula's four sons had settled in Epalanga, and his only classificatory 'son' was Gonçalve, own son to Mwehombo, Sapapula's matrilateral 'brother'. Seven household heads were sister's sons of Sapapula. This trend for matrilateral ties to predominate is marked also in Katembo and Mbunga, but less evident at Belem. Indeed, 'neo-matrilinearity' as a principle of village structure may be a general and not simply a local feature of Umbundu society, since Mr. C. M. N. White[18] has found that the settlements of Ovimbundu within Northern Rhodesia are marked by a predominance of matrilateral ties. This is referable to the contemporary kinship system in which the father-son tie is predominantly a personal one, with a limited extension of attitudes to classificatory fathers, whereas a man's relation with a mother's brother seems little affected by the question of genealogical distance. Perhaps the relations between the group of agnatic kin were so closely tied to the old village structure that when it broke up it disintegrated also the wider agnatic ties. Yet at the same time such matrilineal institutions as matrilineal inheritance and the non-repayment of loans among matrikin have weakened or disappeared.

Running counter to this principle of settling in the village of a senior kinsman who is likely to belong to one's matrikin, is the principle of cross-cousin marriage. 'If you have married your cross-cousin when your son grows up he will see a cross-cousin here, a cross-cousin there, and so he will stay.' That is, a man will stay in his father's village not simply by virtue of the father-son tie but because he will be surrounded by kinsmen. The relation between cross-cousins is one of equality and solidarity, expressed in joking and in burial services. To say that one stays in a place because one has cross-cousins at hand is to indicate an ideal of equal relations with a circle of kinsmen rather than attachment to the following of an important kinsman.

These two principles co-exist in actual social life. A man will recognize and respect a number of senior kinsmen living in his

[18] In letters.

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slave. Once ransomed a boy could not be sold again. If, however, the father was displeased with his son's behaviour he could refuse to ransom him. When a man died, his adolescent sons would go to the household of a classificatory father and the children who did not yet 'have sense' would go with the widow to her kin, returning to their agnatic kin when they were older.

4. *Analysis of the Old Kinship System*

The ethnography of the Ovimbundu does show that there existed a double-descent kinship system, each individual belonging to both a local patrilineal group, and a dispersed matrilineal group, in which movable property is inherited. So great has been the impact of social change that not only have these groups disappeared but it is practically impossible to gain additional information on them by direct questions about their nature and functions. The information on kinship norms does give a somewhat clearer picture.

Within the village there was a very strong emphasis on the unity and solidarity of the men of the village. The men's house was the main social centre of the village where the men ate, received guests, and listened to cases. It was about it rather than about the person of the headman that ritual clustered.[10] The elementary family was not the unit of domestic consumption, and it is clear, from the taboos regarding contact with women kin, and the evidence as to the social life of the man's house that there was little recreational contact between the sexes. The concept of *ondjamba*[11] shows that the elementary family of husband, wife, and children, was morally and ritually significant, but many of the educational, nutritive, and recreational functions frequently associated with it were here attached to the men's house.

The strength of the agnatic ties in this society seems to have lain in the solidarity of the men of the village rather than in the patriarchal authority of fathers over sons. A son was economically independent of his father since he could trade on his own while his father was still living; the most powerful social sanction in the hands of kinsmen, that of being sold as a slave, was

[10] For these rituals see Hastings, pp. 73–76, and Childs, p. 39.
[11] *Ondjamba* will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

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593 604 in the hands of the mother's brother, though the father could, if he wished, intervene; and a man could establish a shrine of his own while his father lived.

613 It is not altogether easy to see how the matrilineal group maintained its cohesion. It was not the working team on which the caravan trade operated since a man's father had first claim on his services, and he could travel with other relatives. Within it alone loans need not be repaid and accusations of sorcery were made; with this in mind, it is evident why, as Dr. Hastings tells us, people tended to avoid the company of their matrikin, [578] and why most disputes arose in the matrilineal groups.[32] It 613 seems that probably the key to the functioning of the matri- 437 lineal groups lies in the details, not now recoverable, of the economy of the caravan trade. As everybody, however successful, was in danger at some time or another of incurring heavy losses,[33] an arrangement by which anybody who was in difficulties could call on his kin for help would be generally acceptable. The association of mutual aid of this sort with matrilineal rather than patrilineal kin would spread losses geographically and would exclude conflicts over currency and movable property from village life. Moreover, the dispersal of the matrilineal kin would provide an individual with business contacts over a considerable area.

5. *Contemporary Kinship Norms*

593 Much of this has disappeared. The men's house is no longer 264 the dining-room of the village male population. Men now often 178 eat with their wives and children though attitudes and practice of this vary between households. People in their twenties knew of the existence of these avoidance rules but it seems that the rules forbidding sons to eat with their mother and eldest sons and daughters to eat with their father are now generally ignored.

[692] [32] Hastings, pp. 18, 87. Disputes within the matrilineal group could be, and very often were, referred to the sub-chief and king. The account of legal proceedings in Hastings (pp. 139–51) suggests that a high proportion of the cases heard by the kings were to do with sorcery. In such cases the social extension of the matrilineal group beyond the area of the sub-chiefdom and the wider political integration achieved by the kingdoms 'co-operated' in preserving a range of social relations beyond the sub-chiefdom.

[33] Apropos of losses Childs quotes Magyar as saying that the Ovimbundu traded for excitement rather than gain (p. 204).

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The rules about avoidance at night are still kept. The prohibitions on a man borrowing his father's clothes and sleeping in the same room as his father seem to survive. The prohibition on a child speaking the name of his father or mother reported by Childs is not, and was not formerly, found in this area. It is, however, wrong for a child to address his parents by name.

Children begin to work in the fields when they are about six. Occasionally boys of 10 to 11 go to the coffee fields for two months work, but usually boys do not go out to work until they are about 14 or 15.

A boy going out to work should ask his father's permission to go though this is not always done. Returning from work whether contract labour or voluntary work a boy should bring presents to his relatives. He would be expected to give something, say, a jacket, to his father, and a cloth to his mother, on returning from voluntary work and a shirt to his father on coming back from contract labour. These gifts should be made in kind. Money lent from son to father should be repaid, though it is wrong for a son to enforce payment by appealing to the post for policemen. A father may give money to his son for bride-wealth, and may suggest a choice of bride. He cannot constrain, nor could he in the past, his son and daughter to a marriage they do not wish.

A man cannot be said to have real authority over his grown sons. The stated norm is that a man's sons stay in the same village till he dies. He has no power to make them do so, and they are not condemned by public opinion if they live elsewhere. A man's attitude to classificatory 'fathers' is determined by the age, status, and personalities of those involved, rather than by jural rights and obligations. I have found men unable to tell me what had become of their own brothers' children.

Formerly when the father of an adolescent boy died he would join the household of a father's brother. Nowadays this would be much less likely, as it is common for such a boy to settle with other categories of kin, notably siblings and maternal kinsfolk. A man is free to stay with his brothers if he wishes, or to leave them.

While the tie between full brothers is held to be the strongest, as regards classificatory brothers there seems to be a slight

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wife of a 'lost' labour migrant the tie with the brother or other kinsman will be more important, though the degree to which there is contact between the two households will vary.

It would seem that the present significance of the brother-sister tie is due to the frequency and likelihood of husbands being away from villages as labourers. The strength of this tie gives added significance to the mother's brother—sister's son tie.

A sister's son traditionally inherited his mother's brother's movable property, and during his lifetime might borrow from him without need of repayment. Against this, the mother's brother had the right to sell his sister's son as a slave and it was he who was considered most likely, both traditionally and at the present day, to practise sorcery against his sister's son. My informants were divided as to whether the sister's son can practise sorcery against his mother's brother. However, it was stated by Hastings[25] and by my informants that sorcery was only practised between matrilineal kin. It is not easy to see how in the past the relationship between a man and his mother's brothers operated—to what extent a man had particular expectations and obligations to one particular mother's brother rather than to the whole set of senior matrilineal kin.

At the present time the content of the relationship between mother's brother and sister's son seems very fluid, depending on age and personal compatibility. An important difference arises between one's attitude to 'mother's brothers' and to 'fathers'. There is no strong tie with one's mother's own brother, as there is with one's own father; on the other hand, a boy whose father has died is regarded as much more likely to go to the house of a classificatory mother's brother than to the house of a classificatory father, although, as has been noted, children and adolescents may settle with kin of other categories.

Traditionally the relationship between a man and his wife's brother was distant and reserved, the two men being forbidden to eat together or joke. Nowadays the relations between a man and his wife's full or half brother are often very friendly; quite often when one finds two households close together they turn out to belong to men related in this way.

A brother-in-law is not regarded as a kinsman—he does not

[25] Hastings, p. 87.

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This strong pull towards the mother's brother is, however, marked on the level of village relationships as has been already noted. It is possible that with regard to co-operation on the domestic plane the tie between a man and his wife's full or half siblings is stronger than that with his sister's children. This argument would claim that the tie created by marriage between a man and his wife's full or half siblings is one of the strongest in the Umbundu social structure, and as a further proof (albeit not quantitively assessed) may be quoted the frequency with which two households close together turn out to belong to a man and his wife's brother.

In the first section of this chapter it was argued that the high rate of preferential marriages greatly increased the number of social ties between individuals in a neighbourhood, and brought a renewal of ties with distant kin. In this section various aspects of the relationship between husband and wife have been examined. Husband and wife co-operate economically and outside working hours may pass their evenings together. In a dispute taken to the post a man is likely to take his wife as a witness. Mystically sanctioned obligations do exist between husband and wife. While the elementary family is the main domestic type, households headed by women are also found and there is a certain amount of mobility of children between households. The tie of a man with his wife's siblings, particularly when they are children, is significant for the domestic organization of households.

Marriage is indeed the pivotal institution of the Umbundu kinship system. The preferential marriages do not link descent groups to one another; rather they bring about the local concentration of kin which makes out of many vague and insecure links a strongly-woven community in which both husband and wife can live with relatives near at hand.

Of the personal relationship between husband and wife it would be impossible to say as an anthropologist has of another African people, 'Here people looked for little in marriage. A man would turn to his sixteenth cousin twice removed before he turned to his wife.'[1] A man shares with his wife his work and leisure, is linked to her by mystical obligations which are not

[1] Elinore Smith Bowen, *Return to Laughter*, London, 1954, p. 115.